

ART. IV. *On Intemperance considered as a Disease and susceptible of Cure.* By JOHN H. KAIN, M. D. of Shelbyville, Tenn.

AN intemperate indulgence in the use of stimulating liquors has long been viewed as the cause of a host of those diseases to which the human body is subject. That depraved appetite which bids defiance to all moral restraint, and impels the unhappy sufferer to the gratification of a propensity which increases his disease, while it lulls his sufferings, has never received that attention from physicians, which its importance demands. Bulimia, salacitas, and nymphomania, diseases in which natural appetites and passions are morbidly excited, have found their places in all systems of medical nosology, and have received a just share of the attention of medical men. A morbid thirst for intoxicating liquors has only been considered a moral disease, and for its cure moral remedies have been thought sufficient. As well might we address arguments to a burning fever, as to think by moral considerations to appease the hunger which is felt in bulimia, or that anorexia and gnawing sensation, which solicits so importunately in the drunkard for the inebriating draught.

Is it not a subject, worthy of the candid consideration of the profession at least, whether too much ignominy has not been attached to a propensity, which the most worthy of our species have been unable to resist? Men, whose conduct in their lucid moments has been most unexceptionable, who are known to possess most amiable dispositions, whose moral worth cannot be disputed, and whose talents are often enviable—such men, in consequence of an unhappy propensity, which I hope to prove to be a disease, have been branded with infamy; and even physicians have united with the pulpit and the press, to reduce them to a level with brutes. A disease which has done incalculable injury to the constitutions and the morals of men, has been combatted only with words, and the unhappy sufferers instead of receiving the commiseration of their fellow men, have been left to aggravate their disease by their imprudence, or held up to the public view as objects of scorn.

When we have seen an emaciated subject of bulimia, consuming nearly half his weight of raw beef, candles, &c. at a meal, we have not hesitated to award him our pity, and have felt happy if we could contribute to the restoration of his health. The nymphomaniac too, has received a no less share of our condolence; and instead of reasoning with her disorder, or holding up her case to the view of mankind as

an astonishing instance of lust and immodesty, we have used the lancet, and directed such general remedies and local applications as are calculated to relieve the disorder. The deluded maniac is often impelled, by an insatiable revenge, to imbrue his hands in the blood of his friend; but the time has passed by when for this he is punished with chains, a dungeon, or a gibbet. He is the subject of medical treatment, and as the light of science advances, and the mysterious connection between the body and the mind becomes better understood, it is not improbable that these diseases will be brought to bow before our art.

Without giving any other name to this disordered appetite which is the subject of consideration, than those commonly applied to it, I would suggest the propriety of making it a species of Goon's genus *Dipsosis*, of the class *Celiaca*, and order *Enterica*. The symptoms of this disease are too well known, and have been by too many felt, to require a particular description. It has its seat in the stomach, and is no doubt produced by a perverted or disordered action of that viscus. One of the most common remote causes of intemperance, is the habit of relieving the anorexia felt before refection, with a glass of wine, spirits, or bitters. Those who eat much and exercise but little; those who are much exposed to the depressing passions; those who undergo great fatigue of body or mind, especially if unsuccessful in their pursuits; those who inordinately indulge the passions of anger, lust, and ribaldry; and those who habitually take tonic and stimulating medicines in spirituous and vinous menstrua, are very apt to become drunkards. The disease, or the tendency to it, is first perceived after being exposed to some of these causes. After an evening debauch, or what the patient would call a party of pleasure, he feels a want of appetite when he comes to his breakfast the next morning; this is readily relieved by a glass of bitters or a cup of very strong coffee, and the enfeebled stomach is goaded on to perform wonders in the eating way. The consequence of such exertion is an impaired digestion; and a heavy, horrible sensation is felt in the region of the stomach. To this is added an indescribably gloomy state of mind. The patient finds business burdensome and solitude insupportable. He flies to the tavern or the doctor, to his medicine chest or the brandy bottle, and soon obtains a temporary truce. A glass of toddy, punch, or sling, soothes his outraged stomach, and prepares him for dinner. If he have no dinner, another glass or two suits him as well, and what he fails in eating he makes up in drinking. It is unnecessary to pursue the history further. He rises the next morning with increased

anorexia, nausea, or vomiting. This is alarming, but is often immediately relieved with warm spiced toddy, peppermint, or capsicum and whiskey, and he is prepared to pass the day as he did the last.

In other diseases, palliatives are often found the best cures. Those medicines which relieve pain, and soothe the uncomfortable feelings of the patient, are sometimes admirably adapted to subdue his disease. Not so with the intemperate. Nothing so quickly relieves his anorexia, his gloomy feelings, and his gnawing pain, as the stimulating draught; but the relief is only temporary, and the remedy ultimately, by its indirect effects, increases all the symptoms of his disorder. The class of tonics, particularly bitters, with or without wine or spirits, so often prescribed in dyspepsia, I consider liable to the same objection. No method can be more certainly calculated to produce habits of inebriety than a long course of vegetable tonics in spirituous menstrua. Such prescriptions may give us a mushroom popularity, but by them we do our patients incalculable injury.

In every intemperate man there is an immutable association in his mind between stimulating liquors and the relief they afford to all the unpleasant sensations which I have described as forming his disease. To him the bottle is a catholicon; it relieves anorexia, gastrodynia, flatulence, nausea, vomiting, colic, and those gloomy feelings which are worse than all. It produces an instant change from pain to pleasure, from despair to hope, and transforms this thorny, rugged wilderness of a world into a paradise. In vain do we prescribe temperance to such a patient. He suffers what those who have not had his disease to the same extent cannot conceive. But his remedy is at hand, and he flies to it as to the only consolation left him. To cure him we must break up this association, and convince him, by actual sensations, that his remedy has lost its effect. We must likewise change the action of the stomach, and restore it to its healthy standard.

Some eight or ten years ago I read an anecdote by Dr. RUSH, of his having cured a negro man of a taste for spirits by the use of emetic tartar. Similar facts are familiar to the profession, and it required no great powers of divination on the annunciation of CHAMBERS'S nostrum, and its effects on drunkards, to pronounce its active ingredient to be the tartrate of antimony. That remedy which can produce nausea, vomiting and purging, is no other than emetic tartar. But these are not its only effects. Possessing no positive taste itself, it communicates a disgusting quality to those fluids in which it is dissolved. I have often seen persons, who from taking our medicine in the form of vinum ant. could never afterwards drink wine. Nothing, there-

fore, seems better calculated to perform our indication of breaking up the association in the patient's feelings between his disease and the relief to be obtained from stimulating liquors. These liquors, with the addition of a very small quantity of the tartrate of antimony, instead of relieving, increase the anorexia, and quickly produces in the patient an indomitable repugnance to the vehicle of its administration.

I may be permitted here to remark, that while I claim no credit for originality in the application of our remedy, I had used it in this disease for some time before I saw the analysis of Chambers's remedy for intemperance by the Committee of the New York Medical Society. My method of prescribing it has varied according to the habits, age, and constitution of the patient. I give it only in alterative and slightly nauseating doses. A convenient preparation of the medicine is 8 grs. of tartrate of antimony dissolved in ℥iv. of boiling water—℥ss. of the solution to be put into a half pint, pint, or quart of the patient's favourite liquor, and to be taken daily in divided portions. If severe vomiting or purging ensue, I should direct laudanum to allay the irritation, and diminish the dose. In every patient it should be varied according to its effects. In one instance in a patient who lived ten miles from me, severe vomiting was produced, more, I think, from excessive drinking than the use of the remedy. He recovered from it, however, without any other bad effects. In some cases the change suddenly produced in the patient's habits has produced considerable lassitude and debility, which was of but short duration. In a majority of cases no other effect has been perceptible than slight nausea, some diarrhœa, and a gradual but very uniform distaste to the menstruum.

In answer to the question, will it always cure? my experience does not enable me to give a positive answer. That it will always when fairly tried, produce a temporary benefit, I have no doubt. I have as little doubt that the remedy in the hands of intelligent medical men, judiciously administered, and cautiously persevered in, will do more to eradicate intemperance than all the merely moral causes which can be brought to bear against the practice.

I fully agree with the Committee of the New York Medical Society, that such a medicine as Chambers's remedy for intemperance in popular practice must be attend with danger. Drunkards, more than any other class of men, are subject to chronic inflammations of the viscera; and, under such circumstances, powerful doses of the tartrate of antimony may do much mischief. Yet, even in these cases, we often prescribe the remedy in very minute doses, with manifest advantage. In a majority of drunkards, I should apprehend no very